



CEPHAM

PAID CONTENT



A story of devotion to science – Rooted in traditional botanicals

A journey forward then back in time



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A journey forward then back in time

“Have you lost your mind?” That was his boss’s first reaction when Anand Swaroop told the president of the pharmaceutical company where the PhD worked as a chemist that he no longer believed in the industry. He had come to the realization that pharmaceuticals were treating symptoms—but not addressing the root causes of disease.

His boss’s second reaction was to offer him a much higher salary to stay. But Swaroop, after 15 years in the pharmaceutical industry, researching, developing and improving drugs, was convinced the true path to health lie elsewhere. It might even run through the Indian herbal tradition he dismissed as “mumbo jumbo” before he headed off to college to study biochemistry as a young man.

Walking away from a lucrative pharma career set Swaroop on a route that paired his devotion to science with his personal and cultural history of traditional Ayurvedic healing. It would lead him full circle, then thousands of miles away to the United States, where he started evidence-based nutritional ingredient supplier Cepham. The vertically integrated supplier of Ayurvedic herbs and other natural ingredients is strongly rooted in science, one of the few international raw ingredients suppliers able to support all manufacturing efforts with full

laboratory and clinical research, including efficacy and bioavailability studies. With main offices in Somerset, New Jersey, the company has deep relationships with growers worldwide and manufacturing bases in India, China and Africa.

Keeping supply chains short

“My endeavor is to make the supply chain short and make dietary supplements affordable.”

— Anand Swaroop, president, Cepham

The company’s vertical integration from growing and harvesting or wild-crafting to final batch testing allows for a more efficient and transparent process. “Over the years, I realized that the complicated supply chain diluted the efficacy of the supplements,” Swaroop says. It also raised prices for brands and consumers. “My endeavor is to make the supply chain short and make dietary supplements affordable.”



The company's labs and top-tier scientists can provide the research brands often can't afford to do on their own—from cellular studies to human trials.



Deep relationships with growers worldwide fuel steady supplies of raw ingredients and ear-to-the-ground insight that hones forecasts. The company's labs and top-tier scientists can provide the research brands often cannot afford to do on their own—from cellular studies to human trials. Four cutting-edge manufacturing and QC facilities provide comprehensive production, from identity confirmation of novel raw ingredients to blending, testing, encapsulating and tableting.

A scientist sees the wisdom of Ayurveda – A path to health

"We looked at how [Ayurvedic ingredients] worked at a cellular level, and how they didn't work when synthesized."

– Anand Swaroop, president, Cepham

Today, Cepham ethnobotanists travel the globe hunting for the most promising and powerful herbal health solutions. But seeds of the company began with one little boy drawn to his grandfather's mysterious back room in India. While his siblings and cousins played outside, Anand Swaroop was lured by the pungent aromas of raw herbs, the mystery of giant jute bags of roots and leaves, ye old Sanskrit texts and the line of people always waiting to visit his grandfather, a naturopathic doctor.



"It was absolutely magical," recalls Swaroop. He found it all fascinating, from the mortar and pestle his grandfather used to turn plants into powders to the transformation in faces even a kid could notice—from worried upon arrival to hopeful and happy when they left with their paper bags of potions.

Between then and the time Swaroop left for college, however, he'd done a complete about face regarding traditional healing. His father, a huge proponent of Ayurvedic healing, fed his family "really bitter tasting potions if they got sick," recalls Swaroop, laughing. "We weren't even allowed to have Tylenol in the house."

In high school, Swaroop, like many teens, fell in love and rebelled. He fell in love with western science. And rebelled against Ayurveda. He started calling it "mumbo jumbo." "I believed modern medicine was going to cure everything," he says. The stash of herbs his father packed him off with to keep him healthy in college? – "straight in the trash when I got to the dorm," he laughs. He dove into science classes, earned a masters in biochemistry and a PhD, chemistry. Then, he was off to 15 years working in the pharmaceutical industry...until his realization that pharma was treating only the symptoms and a niggling that perhaps his father, grandfather and thousands of years of healing tradition, might be a better way.

After turning back to some of the same Sanskrit Ayurveda texts that lined his grandfather's shelves, Swaroop decided to use all of his scientific training to examine Ayurvedic ingredients and how they worked. With "every last cent," he hired a team of chemists and opened a lab in Hyderabad in 1998—and idea behind science-backed ingredients was born. They began using all the modern instruments

and processes Swaroop worked with in his pharma career to deconstruct Ayurvedic ingredients. “We looked at how they worked at a cellular level, and how they didn’t work when synthesized.” He started selling some of these ingredients to U.S. companies.

When his wife was offered a job in the U.S. in 2000, Swaroop jumped at the opportunity to relocate. He opened a distribution facility in NJ and a new version of his lab, as Cepham Life Sciences, in Fulton Heights Maryland. The lab collaborated with three manufacturing plants and an application laboratory in India.

Sustainable is not a buzz word, it’s survival

The company developed relationships with growers worldwide, helping them integrate more sustainable methods. “For us, ‘sustainable’ is not a buzzword, it’s survival,” says Swaroop. “Survival of the environment, the communities we work with and our company.” For example, when he first traveled to Cameroon in search of yohimbe bark, the village chiefs didn’t balk at his large order, as he expected. Rather they had him wait a few hours—until trucks full of freshly harvested trees pulled up to the building. “I was shocked,” he says. Instead of removing the bark from live trees, they cut down the whole tree, then cut off the bark. With that strategy, every tree would have been gone in two years. Instead, Swaroop convinced the chiefs to take him to the forest where he marked about 20 trees with a can of white spray paint. He explained how they could remove bark from one side of the live trees one season and from another side the next. Meanwhile the trees would keep growing bark. He offered them a dollar more per kilo to not cut the trees. “I didn’t need a two-year supply, I needed a steady supply,” he says. Fourteen years later, the agreement still works beautifully. “There are so many stories like that,” says Swaroop, of how the company cultivates sustainable methods worldwide. It also regularly invests in the education of children in communities where ingredients are sourced.

Cepham sources ingredient raw materials worldwide, from rosemary in Morocco to guarana in Brazil. “Having boots on the ground with people we’ve worked with for 20 to 30 years gives us an advantage when it comes to information,” Swaroop says. “COVID-19 helped us realize the strength of the supply chain we built over the decades. We made delivery on time 95% of the time through the pandemic and didn’t raise prices at all.”

The company uses TagOne® blockchain technology to track suppliers, buyers, products and ingredients for full seed-to-shelf transparency. From transparency to troubleshooting, “Cepham always has your brand’s back,” says Swaroop; from last-minute DNA-sequencing of a plant for a Canadian customer facing



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regulatory deadlines to helping another navigate boxes of tender sample plants through the bureaucracy of the Indian Department of Forestry and Biodiversity.

Cepharm's three manufacturing and QC facilities cover a total of 207,000 square feet of production floor and lab space. It also runs a versatile pilot plant in Panchkula, India, for small volume research and development, ensuring brands a seamless transition when scaling up. All facilities are NSF, GMP and ISO certified.

Cepharm labs are dedicated to researching the chemistry of natural products. They constantly conduct safety, efficacy and bioavailability studies on new biological compounds, adding two new ingredients to the portfolio annually. Cepharm scientists can help brands find a more efficacious and sustainable source of a well-known herb. Or, they can help a company attain market share on a nutraceutical by developing scientific support for health claims to give a brand an edge. With a full complement of lab research and clinical capabilities, the company also maintains partnerships with five laboratories at U.S. universities.














Cutting-edge research reveals botanical secrets

Currently, Cepharm scientists are conducting cutting edge in-vitro research on the mechanisms of botanicals and standardized compounds. Using human cell lines, they study exactly how Ayurvedic supplements work on a molecular level, based on medical models. Currently, key areas of exploration include the potential of Ayurvedic ingredients to help with metabolic syndrome, sleep, stress, and provide clean, caffeine-free energy.

Cepharm's place at the top of the industry is proof that Anand Swaroop did not "lose his mind" when he left pharma for flowers and plants. Rather, "I found my path," he says. He thinks his grandfather would have "laughed his heart out" at what he's accomplished—from sneaking peeks into jute bags of plants to supplying brands—and consumers—worldwide with evidence-backed botanical ingredients. His father, a very healthy, Ayurveda-fueled bike riding 87-year-old, thinks he's "finally back on the right track."



35 years of evidence-based herbal ingredients

1978		Cephram founded at the dawn of India's science and tech boom
1980		Develops ingredient production protocols that open entire new industries in India and Asia
1993		Produces first food ingredients, commercial dairy proteins
1996		Make Ayurvedic ingredients available regionally in India
Mid-90s		As DSHEA gains hold and US and European interest in Ayurveda grow, diversifies Ayurvedic ingredient research and production
Early 2000s		Cephram scales up to meet exploding demand for Ayurvedic products in US and Europe
2000		Begins developing relationships with growers beyond India
2004		Cephram launched its US operations. Complete quality assurance facility with pilot plant and QC lab in New Jersey.
2013		Research initiatives begin to include ingredients from sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and South America.
2015		Develop new extraction and fermentation technologies to enhance established Ayurvedic ingredients.
2014-today		Conducts lab studies and trials to support ingredients.
2019		Begins using TagOne® blockchain technology to ensure quality
Today		Continues to grow new partnerships with innovative US brands